

<p>Written Testimony of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society SB 1016, AAC Truth in Advertising by Health Care Providers SB 1077, An Act Concerning the Acceptance By Physicians of Patients who are Medicaid Recipients Public Health Committee – March 6, 2023</p>
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Senator Anwar, Representative McCarthy Vahey, and distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the more than 240 orthopaedic surgeons of the Connecticut Orthopaedic Society (COS) advocating for their patients, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **SB 1016, AAC Truth in Advertising by Health Care Providers** and **SB 1077, An Act Concerning the Acceptance By Physicians of Patients who are Medicaid Recipients**.

The orthopaedic community appreciates this Committee's action to assist the health care consumer in what is often times an overwhelming and confusing market by legislating truth in advertising for all health care professionals. This proposed bill is a key step toward full disclosure and transparency for the healthcare consumer and augments the other important bill before your Committee, SB 899, AAC Title Protection for Physicians which the COS testified in support of last month.

Patients have the right to know who is treating them and what their credentials are, and the Committee's support of the bill is vital to providing them with truth and clarity in order to make the best choice for themselves and their loved ones. Furthermore, the bill requires an identification badge to be worn for the accurate identification of the person administering care, adding another level of consumer awareness and protection.

The proliferation of allied healthcare professionals identifying as "physician" to patients, in advertisements and on social media has led to consumer confusion and misleads patients as the title of physician has been historically and appropriately attributed to and associated with Medical Doctor (M.D.) and/or Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O). It is important that the provisions in this bill that prohibit and penalize misleading, misstating, and deceptive advertising across all modes of communication be enacted to ensure compliance and disciplinary action.

Unfortunately, there are some websites of allied health care professionals stating they have received a medical degree and/or attended a medical school without identifying what type of degree they received or what school they were enrolled in within the college or University they attended. In addition, the surgical and fellowship training they identify are not specifically stated with respect to the type of surgical training. This type of information can be confusing and misleading to an uninformed consumer.

Compliance and enforcement are important to ensure the successful implementation of this bill and the COS appreciates the disciplinary action incorporated in this bill and urge the Committee to include in this bill a framework for the State of Connecticut's Department of Public Health to include a mechanism for receiving complaints from the public; a timeline for processing the complaints in a timely manner and specific penalties for those that are found in violation of truth in advertising.

The Committee's support of this bill is important to the health care consumer's decision-making process. By providing them with truthful information, patients will have the choice and the knowledge to secure the care they need and want from a physician or allied health care professional. We welcome the truth and transparency this bill will bring for accurate decision making by consumers, and we ask for your support of HB 1016.

I would also like to thank the Committee for recognizing the importance of addressing the Medicaid program in HB 1077 and I extend the CT Orthopaedic Society's assistance in working on solutions to enhance access for Medicaid patients.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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